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SUBJECT: U/SYG LE ROY BRIEFS COUNCIL ON JONGLEI VIOLENCE

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: On August 4, at the request of the United States, U/SYG Le Roy briefed the Security Council on inter-tribal violence in Jonglei state that occurred on August 2 and resulted in 185 people, primarily women and children, being killed. Members unanimously condemned the violence and urged that the perpetrators be brought to justice. Some expressed concern that implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) could be adversely affected. Le Roy said the UN is implementing a three-track response to avoid further violence: securing food supplies; facilitating civil society dialogue; and sending a joint civilian-military assessment team to determine how best to prevent retaliatory attacks. In his concluding remarks, Le Roy was joined by the Force Commander of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), Major General Paban Jung Thapa. The United Kingdom, in its capacity as Council President, orally briefed the press afterwards, condemning the attack and its targeting of women and children, appealing to all parties to refrain from retaliation, and urging the Government of Southern Sudan, the United Nations, and local government to coordinate their efforts to protect civilians and provide humanitarian relief. End Summary.

U/SYG Le Roy Briefs the Council

¶2. (SBU) Under Secretary General for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy briefed the Council on August 4 about inter-tribal violence between the Lou-Nuer and Murle tribes that occurred on August 2, 40 kilometers west of Akobo in Jonglei state in southern Sudan. Le Roy said that 185 people were killed, primarily women and children, as well as ten to twelve Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers. In response, Le Roy said that the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) had deployed an additional 200 SPLA officers to the area. Le Roy attributed this attack to food shortages, noting that the World Food Program (WFP) had airlifted 400 tons of food since June 12, when a WFP convoy carrying food by river had been attacked.

¶3. (SBU) Le Roy acknowledged that there had been a history of inter-tribal violence in the area related to cattle raiding and disputed territorial claims. However, Le Roy stressed that the recent spate of violent attacks had been unprecedented in the targeting of women and children and the number of civilians that had been killed. He detailed the series of attacks between the Lou-Nuer and the Murle tribes that had begun in March and had resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. Le Roy emphasized that the weapons used in these attacks were sophisticated, including machine guns and RPGs, but he said despite suggestions that "outside hands" may be involved, the UN had found no evidence to substantiate this to date.

¶4. (SBU) Le Roy also detailed UNMIS assistance to Jonglei, which had begun in May with the establishment of two

temporary operating bases (TOB) in Pibor and Akoba. He noted that the security situation in Sudan is fluid and the UN could not maintain these bases permanently, noting that with the onset of the rainy season, and the need to establish a presence in Abyei, UNMIS troops had left the Jonglei TOBs on July 12. Le Roy said that in response to the August 2 attack, the UN is implementing a three-track approach by first sending an assessment team to the area to determine how UNMIS, presence there could be enhanced.

The United States Intervenes

¶15. (SBU) Ambassador Rice expressed deep concern with the recent outbreak of violence, and urged the GOSS to bring the perpetrators to justice. Rice observed that the violence not only deterred the return of refugees and displaced persons, but exacerbated an already dire situation by causing further displacement. Noting that the GOSS had primary responsibility to provide security, Rice nonetheless urged UNMIS to consider restoring a temporary presence in light of the August 2 attack. Responding to Le Roy's remarks about sophisticated weapons, Rice noted that even if there is no evidence of outside involvement, given the history of Khartoum's arming of militias throughout the South, UNMIS and the Council must be vigilant, particularly since increasing violence could undermine implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Rice concluded by expressing concern for the humanitarian situation and the lack of access to food, asking the UN to clarify the nature of the impediments to humanitarian access, in particular regarding blocked river access.

Other Council Members Respond

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¶16. (SBU) Members unanimously condemned the violence and the perpetrators' deliberate intention to target women and children and urged government authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice. Most members also said that the GOSS, UNMIS and local authorities all needed to coordinate their efforts to protect civilians and provide humanitarian access. Mexico asked the UK to issue a press statement in its capacity as Council President. Uganda, Croatia, France, Austria, Costa Rica, Turkey, Vietnam and Japan joined Mexico in this request.

¶17. (SBU) Croatia and Burkina Faso asked whether the violence threatened preparation for the 2011 referendum and 2010 elections. Russia said it was critical that the violence not affect relations between the north and south and emphasized the importance of CPA implementation. China also expressed concern that inter-tribal conflict could undermine the peace process. Libya questioned whether elections could be conducted peacefully. Burkina Faso requested further information concerning UN efforts to support a conference on inter-tribal reconciliation, and Turkey shared the view that UNMIS must address the root causes of inter-tribal violence.

Le Roy and Thapa Answer Questions

¶18. (SBU) Le Roy responded to Ambassador Rice's question about who was blockading the river by indicating that the Jikany-Nuer tribe was responsible for the blockade. Regarding concerns that the violence could affect the referendum and upcoming elections, Le Roy said it was too early to judge. Le Roy also said that, in terms of bolstering UNMIS, presence in the region, attacks were aberrant, lasting only two to three hours before withdrawal and encompassing a vast amount of territory. Thus, Le Roy noted that air patrols would be a more effective deterrent, particularly given that roads are impassable in the rainy season.

19. (SBU) Major-General Thapa reiterated that temporary operating bases would not yield the same results as increasing air patrols to difficult areas. He noted that the UN was continuing to facilitate meetings, three of which had already taken place, of the conference on inter-Tribal reconciliation. Thapa said that the main difference between this attack and previous attacks had been that the August 2 attack was much more linked to food and the scarcity of resources.

RICE